



Merewood
Arboricultural Consultancy Services

**Land at and adjacent to
Streamside
Harpers Road
Ash**

Woodland management proposals

Prepared by

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. The plot at Streamside/ land at includes two formerly separate areas of land. To the south side of the plot there are open fields whilst to the north end of the plot there is an area of scrub vegetation and trees.
- 1.2. The plot is divided by a belt of woodland, comprised of native species. The dominant tree species forming the upper canopy woodland is oak and ash whilst the understory layer is made up of hawthorn, hazel and elm suckering. Holly is prevalent throughout the understory and is gaining such a hold as to present a threat to natural regeneration. Ivy too has been left unchecked and now smothers several of the trees both in the understory and the upper canopy.
- 1.3. The site has been acquired for development. The proposals are to create two areas of development to the north and to the south side of the site, using the belt of woodland in the middle as a separation between the two halves. The intention is to incorporate the woodland as part of the overall scheme as a communal amenity area.

2. Objectives

- 2.1. The woodland has no commercial value as such, since it is such a small area and the quality of the trees is poor in terms of actual timber value.
- 2.2. The use of the woodland as an amenity area will require the trees to be kept in as reasonably safe condition as might be expected, so some tree works and general management is going to be required.
- 2.3. The woodland is also a haven for wildlife, providing habitats for insects, small mammals, nesting birds and potentially bats. The ecological value of the woodland can be regarded as similar to that of the amenity value of the woods and these two aspects can be managed hand in hand.
- 2.4. The proposals for actual tree work reflect the need to restore the natural regeneration potential of the woodland floor, to manage existing stock to keep the trees as reasonably safe as possible and to continue to encourage ecological diversity.

3. The management proposals

- 3.1. The management of the woods in the future must reflect both the needs of the woodland and the needs of the occupiers of the properties around which the woodland exists. The woodland should be managed in a way that encourages it to be able to continue to thrive, regenerate and provide a suitable environment for a diverse range of species.

- 3.2. The removal of ivy growing on the stems of mature trees is recommended for two reasons. First, ivy growing densely on a stem or into the crown of the tree will create a heavy sail effect, adding weight to stems and branches that could result in failure during adverse conditions. Furthermore the density of ivy around the branches of especially smaller trees can lead to a reduction of the photosynthetic area of the tree canopy, smothering the tree and leading to an early death.
- 3.3. Secondly, the removal of ivy allows trees to be examined without visual restriction. Ivy can cover up cavities, cracks or other abnormalities on a tree stem or the branches, so removing it makes tree inspections more efficient and more likely to pick upon serious defects.
- 3.4. The majority of holly bushes should be cut down. Holly will regenerate growth from cut stumps, but roots should not be ground out or grubbed up where this is likely to cause a disproportionate amount of damage to surrounding tree roots.
- 3.5. General debris and fly tipped material is to be removed from the woodland floor and disposed of off-site.
- 3.6. Broken branches, larger deadwood and other natural materials are to be cut to an appropriate size and stacked in small piles. This is to encourage the growth of fungi and small plants to sustain an insect population as the starting point of a food chain. Stacked materials also provide micro habitats for a variety of creatures, both vertebrate and invertebrate.
- 3.7. Thereafter tree surgery operations will be carried out on an ad hoc basis, whenever the need arises following the initial clean-up operations. The responsibility for the overall management of the woods will likely rest with the residents, so a simple management committee may need to be established to ensure this takes place.

4. The management of old hedgerow trees

- 4.1. Alongside the belt of woodland, to the west side are a number of old hedgerow trees that had been previously managed as coppice, routinely pruned down. These specifically include the ash trees (T13, T14, T15 and T17) which have been left unmanaged in recent years to grow on as standards.
- 4.2. These trees are forming multiple stemmed trees and there is a risk that the old coppice stools, which were originally the point to which the young shoots would be pruned down to, will decay.
- 4.3. As decay establishes the chances of a main stem collapsing, tearing the stool open will increase. This in turn will lead to further more rapid decay and the feature will be lost.

- 4.4. It is therefore proposed to prune the main stems down in order to encourage a regeneration of young shoots that will in turn encourage the development of new wood around the stool.
- 4.5. The pruning will involve the cutting down of the larger stems as far as the existing stool, leaving short stubs of about 5cm to prevent the reaction wood around the stools from being damaged. Smaller shoots are too left intact in order to continue to feed the trees whilst they grow new shoots.